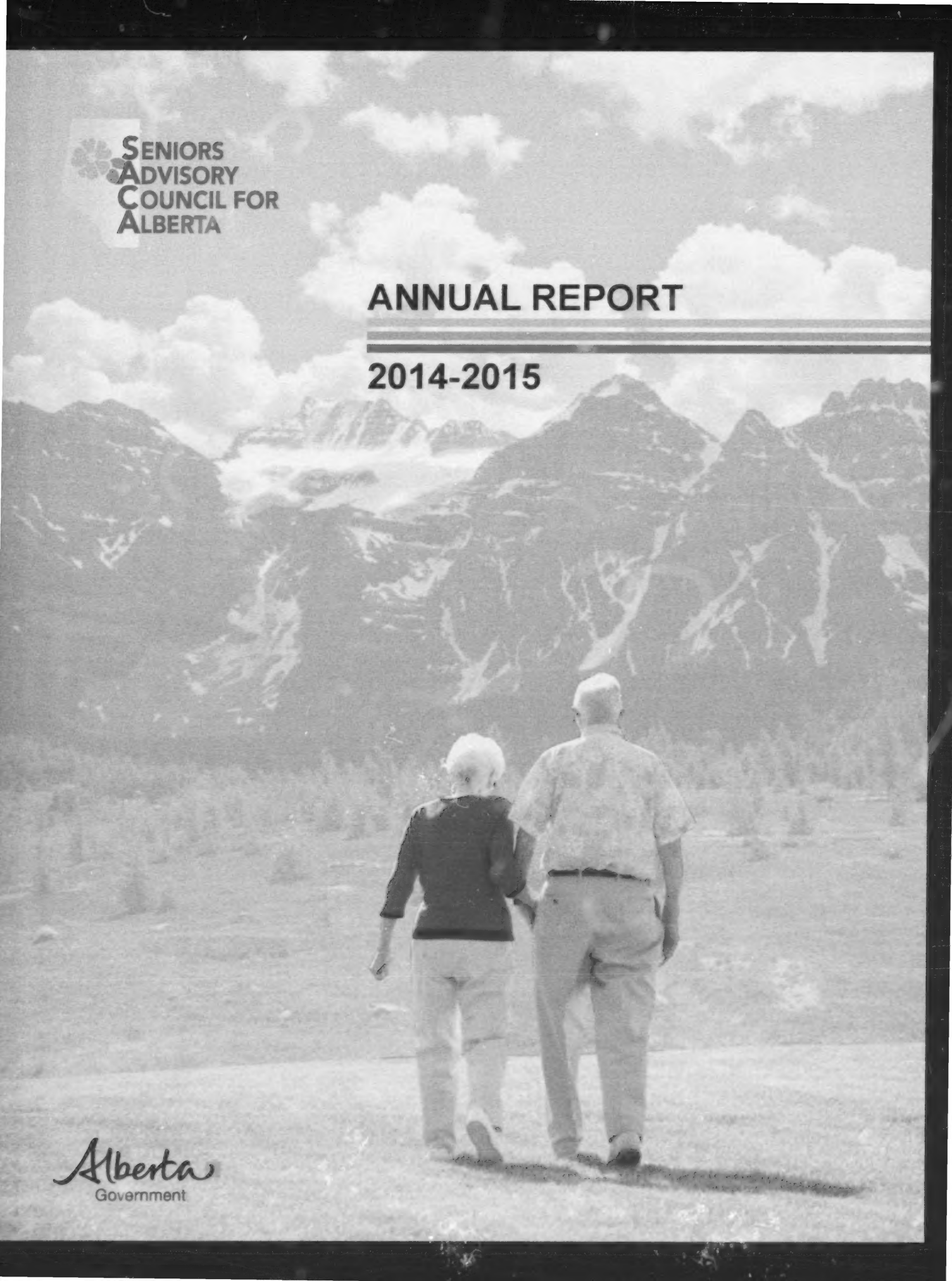
SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2014-2015



Alberta Government

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA ..... 4**

**VISION ..... 5**

**MISSION ..... 5**

**VALUES ..... 5**

**THE COUNCIL'S MANDATE ..... 6**

**COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP ..... 7**

*2014-15 Council ..... 7*

**REGIONAL MAP ..... 8**

**STANDING COMMITTEES ..... 9**

**SENIORS' WEEK ..... 10**

**KEY ISSUES IMPACTING SENIOR CITIZENS ..... 10**

*Transportation ..... 10*

*Affordable Accommodation ..... 11*

*Aging at Home ..... 11*

**COUNCIL'S ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT ..... 11**

*Seniors Sexual Health ..... 11*

*Special Needs Assistance for Seniors Program (Medical Trips) ..... 12*

*Quality of Meal Services ..... 12*

*Health and Supportive Living Standards ..... 13*

*Funding for Community Agencies and Services for Seniors ..... 14*

**CLOSING REMARKS ..... 15**

**COUNCIL BIOGRAPHIES ..... 16**

*Chair ..... 16*

*Alberta Medical Association ..... 17*

*Calgary and Area Region ..... 17*

*Edmonton and Area Region ..... 19*

*North Seniors Centres ..... 22*

*South Seniors Centres ..... 23*

*South Region ..... 23*

**APPENDIX A - SENIORS' CENTRES REPORT ..... 24**

*Introduction ..... 24*

*Summary of Responses ..... 24*

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

This past year members worked diligently, connecting with seniors and senior serving organizations to understand their views on issues that affect seniors in Alberta. This valuable information helped to inform advice and feedback to the Government of Alberta on strategies and policies, and supported a number of recommendations to government to enhance senior citizens' quality of life.

Through-out the year, the Council provides the Minister of Seniors with advice and recommendations on issues that are widespread and that affect many seniors living in Alberta.

A summary of this advice has been included in this report. The Council was pleased that government highlighted the importance of the growing and changing seniors' population and appointed a Minister of Seniors in September 2014.

We look forward to continuing our dialogue with seniors and trust that our work has a positive impact of the lives of seniors and their families.

## VISION

To increase the recognition of seniors as one of Alberta's most respected and valuable resources.

## MISSION

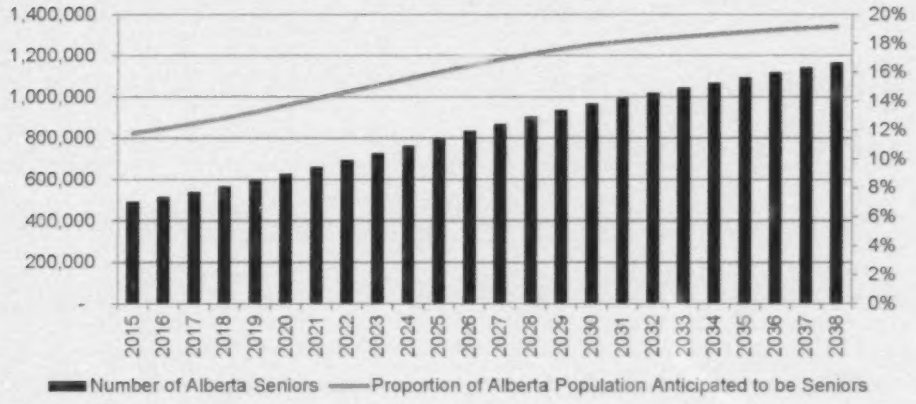
Consult with seniors, seniors' organizations and others to gather information and provide advice to the government regarding seniors' needs.

## VALUES

Integrity, accountability and respect; through these, the Council strives to enable Alberta seniors to maintain their dignity and quality of life.

Alberta's population, like the rest of Canada's, is aging. As of March 2015, there were approximately 500,000 seniors in Alberta. By 2032, when the last of the baby boomers reach 65 years of age, it is projected there will be more than one million seniors in Alberta. Seniors represent a growing proportion of the population and within 20 years about one in five Albertans will be a senior. Many seniors are living longer, healthier and more active lives. The growing and changing seniors demographic, presents new opportunities, challenges, and expectations for all sectors of society, and for all levels of government.

Projected Alberta Seniors Population, 2015-2038
(Statistics Canada, 2014)




## THE COUNCIL'S MANDATE

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta is a key link between seniors, their families, caregivers, service providers and the Government of Alberta.

Council members hear views and concerns of seniors by meeting with individuals and organizations throughout the province. The suggestions and feedback are used to develop advice and recommendations that influence government policies, programs and services for seniors.

In order to stay informed about government initiatives and programs, Council will receive presentations from Government of Alberta ministries, and other organizations who serve the needs of seniors.

This past year, the Council received presentations from the Government of Alberta on elder abuse prevention, continuing care and the Health and Seniors Advocates.

The Council also met with Edmonton members from Seniors United Now to listen to their perspectives of what is important to their members.

## COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

**2014-15 Council**

| | NAME | REGION |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Alana DeLong, Chair | MLA Calgary-Bow |
| 2 | Dr. Guy Gokiert | Alberta Medical Association |
| 3 | Dr. Al Cook | Alberta Universities |
| 4 | Margaret Usherwood | Calgary and Area |
| 5 | Lalita Singh | Calgary and Area |
| 6 | Debra Armstrong | Calgary and Area |
| 7 | Roger Will | Central |
| 8 | Dan Van Alstine | Edmonton and Area |
| 9 | Laurie Morris | Edmonton and Area |
| 10 | Margaret Mrazek | Edmonton and Area |
| 11 | Roger Laing | Edmonton and Area |
| 12 | Larry Lang | North East |
| 13 | Sally Heinen | North West |
| 14 | Jane Manning | North West |
| 15 | Robert Tarleck | South |
| 16 | Monica Morrison | North Seniors Centres |
| 17 | Luanne Whitmarsh | South Seniors Centres |

The Council is comprised of Albertans with a range of knowledge, experience and perspectives on issues that matter to seniors. The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta Act allows for up to 20 members to serve on the Council; members are appointed for a term of up to three years and may be reappointed for another term, to a maximum of six consecutive years. The Act also states that one member of the Council must be appointed to represent:

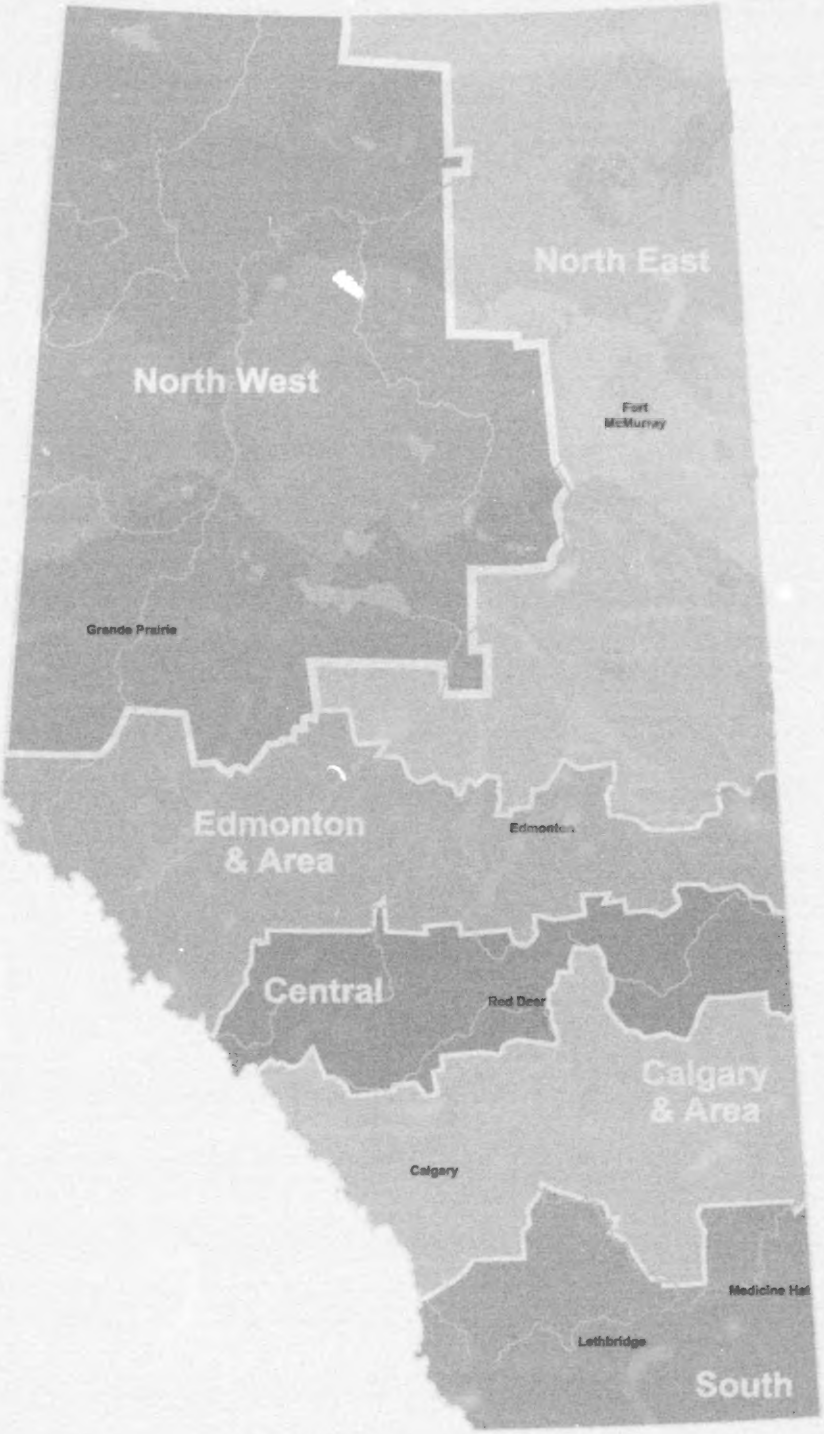
- the Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- the Alberta Medical Association; and
- a university as defined in the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*.

Members are appointed to represent six geographic regions of the province: North West, North East, Edmonton and Area, Central, Calgary and Area, and South.

As well, two seniors' centre representatives, with one-year terms engaged seniors' centres to better understand their challenges and successes.

By engaging with seniors and stakeholder organizations in their regions, Council members learn about local issues and regional matters that have an impact on seniors in their community and throughout Alberta.

## REGIONAL MAP



## STANDING COMMITTEES

The Council uses a committee structure to review members' activity reports and determine if there are concerns that need further research. Reports are also reviewed in conjunction with government policies, programs and services to determine whether recommendations may be required. Committee recommendations are provided to the Council and discussed by all members at full Council meetings. Based on this discussion, Council may determine that an issue warrants a formal recommendation to the government through the Minister of Seniors.

Each committee has a mandate to examine certain issues and subject matter:

- **Accommodations Committee** – Reviews and develops policy recommendations related to seniors accommodations. With a view to related programs and services that are already available, the committee determines where service gaps may exist and determines ways to address identified accommodation issues.
- **Communications Committee** – Reviews existing government communications methods and materials to help ensure seniors receive effective and relevant information regarding programs and services for seniors.
- **Elder Abuse/Diversity Committee** – Looks at community and government initiatives to reduce and address elder abuse, and considers ways to ensure seniors from different cultures and ethnic groups have access to information and resources. The committee also evaluates existing programs and services to help ensure they are meeting the needs of seniors.
- **Health and Wellness Committee** – Examines health-related government programs and services, identifies health service issues and gaps, and proposes solutions that will help enhance the wellness of seniors.
- **Transportation Committee** – Examines transportation issues faced by seniors and ways to provide safe and affordable transportation services in Alberta.

In addition to its standing committee structure, two Seniors Centre representatives were appointed for one year to focus on gathering information from seniors' centres regarding their challenges and opportunities to help seniors in their communities. The findings have been summarized and will be evaluated by the Council in 2015-16. Appendix A provides a summary of key issues identified by seniors' centres.

## SENIORS' WEEK

Each year the Government of Alberta proclaims the first week of June as Seniors' Week to acknowledge and respect the contributions of seniors in Alberta. Council members attend events in their communities, as it provides them with a way to raise awareness of their work and to talk with seniors and seniors' organizations.

During Seniors' Week in 2014, 29 municipalities joined the Government of Alberta to proclaim Seniors' Week. In addition, organizations across the province registered their events on the government website to inform Albertans about activities occurring in their communities.

## KEY ISSUES IMPACTING SENIOR CITIZENS

By consulting with Alberta's seniors and stakeholder organizations, the Council identifies key issues and trends in the province that affect seniors and their quality of life. Council members consult directly with seniors, family members and seniors' organizations in their geographic regions to hear their perspectives. Often these consultations involve members meeting informally and talking with seniors at events held in their communities. This direct contact enables members to hear from a broad spectrum of seniors living in the general community and in facilities.

Over the past year, the Council continued to monitor a number of emerging and ongoing issues that affect seniors in Alberta. Council will continue to gather additional information on these topics as required, and discuss them further to determine if formal advice and recommendations to the Minister of Seniors should be developed.

### Transportation

Transportation is an important factor that contributes to a senior's health and well-being. Seniors need to be able to access transportation for groceries, employment, medical appointments, volunteering, social functions, recreation and other activities. Council recognizes that not every senior will have medical complications that compromise their ability to drive, and some individuals may choose not to drive due to their own comfort level. In all cases, transportation alternatives are vital to seniors' health and wellness and their ability to participate in community life.

Council members continue to hear concerns about the availability of affordable and accessible transportation to meet the needs of seniors as they age or their health status changes. This is particularly evident in rural communities that may not have public transportation, or where medical services are not available in their own community.

Council has heard from some communities that medical services were removed or relocated to another community, making it necessary for seniors to travel to obtain services that are no longer available close to home. This need to travel for health care services not only affects the patient, but also the family and support network they rely upon to get to and from medical appointments or hospital.

### Affordable Accommodation

Council members continue to hear concerns from seniors and service providers about the lack of affordable housing options ranging from independent living to long-term care.

Another issue is the availability of supportive living accommodation for seniors who can no longer live in their own homes because of their health, but who still wish to remain in their community. Council is aware that government has committed to increasing supportive living accommodation through the Affordable Supportive Living Initiative, which is a welcome step forward.

Council encourages government to continue building to ensure there are affordable housing options to serve the increasing number of seniors.

### Aging at Home

Older adults have expressed how important it is to have access to services that allow them to remain in their homes for as long as practical, including home care services. These services include essential health supports and home supports such as house cleaning, meal preparation, grocery shopping, and yard maintenance and opportunities to socialize with other seniors.

## COUNCIL'S ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT

The Council developed advice and recommendations on several issues, with the goal of improving seniors' well-being and opportunities for full and equal participation in their communities.

### Seniors Sexual Health

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta advised the Minister of Health that there are not adequate guidelines or policies in place to ensure that seniors who live in supportive living accommodations are given the privacy, dignity, and respect needed to address all aspects of their sexual health. This includes married couples, single seniors and LGBTQ[1] seniors.

The Council heard that seniors are embarrassed and feel they have no say in this area of their lives. It is important that all staff and management who provide care and assistance

1. lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, questioning

to seniors have a clear understanding and awareness regarding the importance of healthy sexuality and that guidelines and staff training be implemented to ensure residents receive the privacy they deserve.

This issue is important to seniors who live in supportive living facilities as well as those who live independently in the community. Therefore, the Council encourages government to raise overall public awareness regarding healthy aging and sexuality in general.

Furthermore, the Council has heard that there has been a considerable increase in the number of seniors who are contracting sexually transmitted infections, and believes that a communications plan is needed to educate the public at large and thereby increase the safety, respect and dignity of seniors.

**Special Needs Assistance for Seniors Program (Medical Trips)**

The Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program currently provides funding to eligible seniors for medical trips greater than 100 kilometres (round trip) to see a specialist or for medical testing/treatment.

Council members have heard repeatedly from low-income seniors who require ongoing or multiple appointments; such as for dialysis or cancer treatment, or specialist visits; that the travel expenses are causing a financial burden. Medical trips can add up to significant travel within a month, but are not eligible for funding because a single trip is not greater than 100 kilometers.

Therefore, the Council recommended that the Minister of Seniors amend the guidelines for the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program to allow for travel costs associated with frequent medical trips, when the cumulative distance exceeds 50 km per month. This change would enable eligible seniors to attend necessary medical appointments without incurring an undue financial burden.

**Quality of Meal Services**

Through its engagement with seniors and Albertans, the Council heard complaints about the quality of meal services provided in care facilities. Meal times are very important to seniors' health and well-being, and the dining experience is a big part of residents' quality of life. It is important to remember that this is now the senior's home. Therefore, meal services should be unrushed and provide residents with a pleasant social experience and opportunities to socialize with each other and with their friends and family, as well as ensuring their nutritional requirements are met.

Council members heard concerns that some seniors are experiencing weight loss when moving to care facilities and that the following may be contributing to this problem:

- Food is not always cooked on site, which stimulates and increases appetite with the smell of home cooking;
- Staff may not spend enough time with clients who require feeding assistance, and do not always ensure residents consume the food provided; and
- Some seniors have challenges chewing or swallowing and it is essential that employees are educated about the importance of taking the required time to ensure seniors consume adequate food.

The Council recommended to the Minister of Seniors that the Continuing Care Standards stipulate:

- Operators must ensure an adequate number of appropriately trained staff is available to assist those who require help eating;
- Enough staff are in place to ensure meal time is not rushed; and
- Food is cooked on the premises to stimulate residents' appetite.

**Health and Supportive Living Standards**

The Council received concerns about the Continuing Care Health Service Standards and the Supportive Living and Long-Term Care Accommodation Standards, and made the following recommendations to government:

- The need for more staff and better trained staff;
- The need for better quality food service and staff assistance for those who need help;
- That the standards should address recreation activities to ensure meaningful activities are offered, including activities that engage dementia clients;
- The need for recreation staff to have specific education and training in gerontology and in techniques that will encourage client participation; and
- The need to have unannounced audits at care centres.

Council also advised that they would welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the standards during the review process to ensure Albertans' concerns are considered in the development of new standards.

## Funding for Community Agencies and Services for Seniors

The Council has heard concerns from communities throughout the province that the funding available to senior serving agencies that provide important services to seniors is inadequate.

There is a growing seniors' population, coupled with an increase in the population in general, which is placing a burden on community agencies to meet increased demand for services. Council is also aware that Family and Community Support Services has not received a budget increase for a number of years, which is impacting communities' ability to fund local agencies.

Seniors need community supports in order to stay in their own homes and age in place. These supports include:

- Transportation;
- Outreach services including information and referral;
- Income tax preparation;
- Home services: yard maintenance, snow removal, household maintenance, housekeeping, grocery shopping;
- Meal services;
- Friendly visiting; and
- Non-medical adult day programs

The Council understands that government has a social policy encouraging people to age in place, but it appears that government does not have adequate funding programs to fund community initiatives to help them do this. The Council, therefore, recommended that government design a funding program so that community agencies can provide the services low-income seniors need to maintain their quality of life in the community.

## CLOSING REMARKS

The 2014–15 year was an eventful one for the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta. Council members wish to thank the many people and organizations who have shared their views and perspectives with them over the past year. The thoughts and concerns of seniors, families, and all interested Albertans are very important and support the work of the Council. It is through these connections that the Council is able to provide an effective and meaningful voice for seniors of Alberta.

Members of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta feel honoured to serve on this unique Council and hope its advice and recommendations will result in tangible actions that advance the interests of seniors and improve their quality of life.

## COUNCIL BIOGRAPHIES

### Chair

**Alana DeLong**
MLA, Calgary Bow (2001-2015)

Alana DeLong was elected to her fourth term on April 23, 2012, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly representing the Constituency of Calgary Bow.

Ms. DeLong was a member of the Legislative Offices Committee, the Standing Committee on Private Bills and the Standing Committee on Families and Communities. Ms. DeLong Chaired the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and Alberta's Delegation of the Pacific North West Economic Region (PNWER). In 2010 she co-chaired the PNWER Calgary Summit Host Committee.

Born in Nelson, British Columbia, Ms. DeLong obtained her Bachelor of Science (Honours) in mathematics with a minor in theatre from the University of British Columbia. She then moved to Calgary, where she attended courses at the University of Calgary, Master's in Computer Science Program.

Ms. DeLong has more than 20 years of experience in the field of information technology and has worked for many leading high-tech computer firms in Calgary. She has campaigned extensively for the Red Cross Society, the Cancer Fund, the Heart and Stroke Fund, Flowers of Hope, and various municipal, national and provincial elections.

Ms. DeLong was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta as Chair in 2011.

### Alberta Universities

**Dr. Al Cook**

Dr. Cook specializes in assistive device technology and the use of robots to develop and reveal cognitive and language abilities in children who have severe disabilities.

In addition to being associated with the Assistive Device Service at the Glenrose Hospital, Dr. Cook has served as Co-Director of the Assistive Device Center at California State University.

He received his Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering at the University of Colorado and his Masters in bio-engineering as well as his Doctorate from the University of Wyoming.

Dr. Cook was a Professor in the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at the University of Alberta. Dr. Cook also served on several committees for Alberta Health and Wellness.

Dr. Cook was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2008, served for six years and retired in 2014.

## Alberta Medical Association

**Dr. John Guy Gokiert**

Dr. Gokiert was born in southern Manitoba and moved to the Edmonton area with his family where he attended the University of Alberta. After medical school, he moved to Westlock, Alberta. Dr. Gokiert practiced family medicine until his retirement in 2009. During his career, Dr. Gokiert worked with the Alberta Medical Association (President in 1994-1995), the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Protective Association.

Dr. Gokiert was involved as president of the Medical Staff at both the acute care hospital and a long term care facility in Westlock as well as a medical examiner for the province. Dr. Gokiert also taught in the faculty of medicine at the University of Alberta.

Dr. Gokiert was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2010.

## Calgary and Area Region

**Debra Armstrong**

As an active community member and a long time geriatric social worker, Debra has provided her leadership on numerous boards and community collaborates around issues concerning Alberta's aging demographic. For ten years she provided executive leadership to programs and services throughout Alberta that addressed seniors' isolation and increased a sense of belonging for older adults.

Debra has a Bachelor of Social Work and is registered with the Alberta College of Social Workers. Her career includes Case Manager with Alberta Child and Family Services; Community Social Worker with the City of Calgary; and Executive Director of LINKages Society of Alberta, a social based agency that connects youth and vulnerable seniors in meaningful ways. Under her leadership, the LINKages Society was a recipient of a 2013 Minister's Seniors Service Award.

**Lalita Singh**

Lalita is a Community Coordinator, North East Neighbourhood for United Way of Calgary and has more than 22 years of experience as a community development professional (in India and Canada). Lalita is an avid volunteer, taking pride in lending a hand in several ethnic and mainstream organizations. Currently, she is the Chair of the Seniors Constellation, which is comprised of service providers and residents who identify work to create strategies to resolve issue facing seniors in north east Calgary.

Lalita has a Master of Arts (Psychology) and a Master of Philosophy with a Post Graduate Diploma in Personnel Management and Labour Welfare, and a Diploma in Community Development. Lalita is fluent in English, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu.

Ms. Singh was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2014.

**Margaret Usherwood**

Margaret trained as a registered nurse and studied Marketing at Ryerson University, Toronto and Gerontology at the University of Calgary. Her past experience includes working as a Senior Product Manager (medical) and consultant and as Executive Director for Private Home Care Services. Margaret is employed by Carewest as a Client Service Manager, for the Adult Day Programs and Designated Supportive Living Programs.

Ms. Usherwood was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2011.

<u>Central Region</u>

**Roger Will**

Roger Will has been a realtor in the Central Alberta area for 30 years.

He has been actively involved in the Central Alberta community and has been on a number of committees over the past 20 years, including board member with the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Central Board for six years and Vice Chair of the Emergency Services Master Plan Committee. Roger has also volunteered on several housing related boards such as the Mayor's Task Force to End Homelessness Working Committee, Vice President of the Central Alberta Housing Committee, and the Community Housing Advisory Board (CHAB) Homelessness Initiative & Affordable Housing.

Mr. Will was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2013.

## Edmonton and Area Region

**Margaret Mrazek Q.C.**

Marg Mrazek began her career as a general duty nurse. She later held senior management positions in an acute care hospital until she returned to university to obtain her law degree at the University of Alberta. She subsequently carried out a general practice of law. Marg also has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing and a Master's Degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Alberta.

Marg's varied career in health care included some involvement in the provision of care for the elderly as well as managerial responsibility for programs of care impacting seniors.

She has served on a number of boards including being Chair of the Fatality Review Board and member of the Board of Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research.

Marg was privileged to be able to assist with the care for her mother over a number of years, an experience that helped her understand the challenges many seniors face, remaining independent and active in the community. She believes this insight will assist her as she serves as a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta.

Ms. Mrazek was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2013.

**Roger Laing**

Roger is the Executive Director of Sage, the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton, a role he has fulfilled since 1997. As Executive Director, he has been active in many community collaborations and instrumental in establishing a number of innovative services for seniors.

Roger played a key role in establishing the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) and the Alberta Association of Seniors Centres. He has twice served on the ESCC Board in Executive roles and currently serves as Past President of Alberta Association of Seniors Centres.

In 2005, Roger received a Centennial medal from the Government of Alberta for his work with seniors and in 2013 he received a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for his service to seniors. Mr. Laing was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2013.

**Reverend Canon Dan VanAlstine**

Reverend Canon Daniel R. Van Alstine, has been an Anglican priest for the past thirty three years, and has extensive experience working with seniors, community organizations and seniors' programs. Reverend Canon Van Alstine received the dignity of Canon, All Saints Cathedral in 2006, and was a recipient of the Province of Alberta Volunteer Service Award in 1988. Reverend Canon Van Alstine studied at the University of Alberta receiving his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Religious Studies and Anthropology in 1973.

Reverend Canon Van Alstine is an active member of the community, giving numerous hours of service to a broad sector of organizations ranging from Disaster Chaplain with the City of Edmonton, Consultancy work for Family Violence and Bullying Initiatives with the Department of Child Services, to being a member on the Animal Welfare Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta.

Reverend Van Alstine was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2013 and left the Council in 2014.

**Laurie Morris**

Laurie Morris is a clinical social worker employed at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital in Edmonton, and works primarily in the area of geriatrics. She has extensive contact with seniors, their caregivers and families with a clinical focus on dementia and capacity assessment.

Over the years, Laurie has been involved in a volunteer capacity with her professional association, community social service agencies/organizations, school parent advisory councils, and sports/recreation events and associations.

Laurie was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2009 and completed her six years of service in 2015.

North East Region

**Larry Lang**

Larry lives in Clyde, Alberta and spent 20 years developing international trade. Larry has a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture/Economics and speaks Mandarin and French. Larry retired in 1993 from his position as the Director, Southeast Asia Division with Economic Development and Tourism.

Larry did various consultant projects for private companies to establish export markets for Alberta beef products with buyers from Korea, Japan and Hong Kong.

In 1986 Larry set up a cattle ranch north of Edmonton and in 2006 began a pedigreed Alpaca producing operation. For the past 10 years, Larry and his wife served on the board of the Clyde Seniors Drop in Centre and he continues to be involved with seniors in lodges in his community.

Mr. Lang was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2013.

North West Region

**Sally Heinen**

Sally Heinen is enthusiastic about promoting seniors to be active participants in all aspects of their communities. She has chaired and volunteered on the Community Services Board, which supported a Home Support Program for seniors, enabling them to live in their own homes as long as possible.

Mrs. Heinen's love of children led her to spend the last 20 years in the school system, volunteering to help students on special projects or with minor sports like hockey. She also chaired and volunteered with many Parent Advisory Councils.

Mrs. Heinen has developed an immense passion for seniors, mostly from her family members. She grew up watching her grandparents manoeuvre through retirement. And now, her parents are in their eighties and are still working and loving it. All of this has helped Mrs. Heinen to realize her belief that seniors continue to have an important role in our society.

**Jane Manning**

Jane Manning has lived in Grande Prairie for over 30 years and is passionate and committed to representing northern and rural communities and all those who call the north home. Ms. Manning is a Registered Nurse and a board member of the Wapiti Community Dorm Society, which manages the Rotary House Emergency Shelter in Grande Prairie.

Ms. Manning is a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness and serves as Chair of the Integrated Housing and Supports Framework Committee. She also is a member of the Grande Prairie Community Advisory Board on Homelessness and the United Way of Alberta Northwest Board.

Until she retired in 2007, Ms. Manning held the position of Vice-President of Regional Health Services for the Peace Country Health Region.

Ms. Manning was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2011.

North Seniors Centres

**Monica Morrison**

Monica has been involved with seniors for 23 years. With her recreation background, Monica has worked in long term care, adult day programming, seniors' centres and community support services. She spent most of her career in Ontario and moved to Red Deer in 2011 so she and her husband could be closer to their daughter and grandchild.

Monica is the Executive Director at the Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre in Red Deer, and a Director on the Alberta Association of Senior Centres Board and a member of the Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network. She is also a member of the Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance and chairs the Living Wage Subcommittee.

Monica is actively developing a community protocol for elder abuse, and chairs the community conversation to develop a hoarding support services protocol. Monica believes that all seniors deserve a good quality of life and she and her staff work hard with the community to find solutions to seniors' issues and identify service gaps.

Monica was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for a one year term in 2013.

## South Seniors Centres

**Luanne Whitmarsh**

Luanne Whitmarsh became the Chief Executive Officer at Kerby Centre on July 1, 2008. Luanne is a Registered Social Worker and Certified Professional Consultant on Aging. Although most of Luanne's career has centered on working with people with developmental disabilities, she currently enjoys working with the senior sector.

Luanne is devoted to community development and partnerships that serve and support older adults. Luanne has actively participated on the Older Adult Service Providers of Calgary since the beginning and contributes to the goals of the group and is the Vice-President of The Alberta Association of Seniors Centres.

Ms. Whitmarsh was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for a one year term in 2013.

## South Region

**Robert D. (Bob) Tarleck**

Robert Tarleck is a long-time educator who received a lifetime membership from the Alberta Teachers' Association for his work in education and public service.

As a former municipal councillor he played a leadership role in creating the Lethbridge and District Community Futures Program and the Native Liaison Committee. He was recognized by the Alberta Human Rights Commission for his work with the aboriginal community and was subsequently elected to the Kainai Chieftainship with the name Ako'tasi (Many Horses).

As former mayor of Lethbridge, he played a central role in creating Economic Development Lethbridge, a broad-based community development model that includes representation from the environmental, ethnic, cultural, aboriginal and seniors sectors.

Since retiring from municipal politics in 2001, Bob has been a member of the Alberta Economic Development Authority, the Oldman Watershed Council, and the Aboriginal Housing Society. He has also undertaken research projects on water and alternative energy for a coalition of rural communities in southern Alberta.

Bob was appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for one year in 2013, and left the Council in 2014.

## APPENDIX A - SENIORS' CENTRES REPORT

### Introduction

In December 2013, Luanne Whitmarsh and Monica Morrison were appointed to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta for a one-year term to gather information from seniors' centres across Alberta through a 10 question survey.

Other members of the Council assisted with the distribution of this survey, including the Alberta Association of Seniors Centres.

In total, 336 seniors' centres were surveyed. Forty-four surveys, or 13 percent of seniors' centres, responded to the survey which covered an operating period from 2012 to 2014.

The following is a summary of the responses, which will be further analyzed and discussed by Council in 2015.

### Summary of Responses

1. Number of Paid Members

   The number of paid members ranged from five to nearly 2,000. Larger communities are able to support larger centres, which tend to have more members; some centres reported having no paid members. Membership numbers stayed relatively steady over the three-year period and four centres, two in large cities and two in rural Alberta, had an increase in membership of 25 or more during this time period.

2. Number of Non-Members Taking Programs

   Seventeen of the 44 centres surveyed indicated they had a number of non-members using their programs.

3. Annual Cost of Memberships

   The annual cost of a membership ranged from a donation to $50.00. The average price per year for a membership is $10.00 in rural seniors' centres.

4. Number of Volunteers

   The number of volunteers reported ranged from zero to more than 250.

5. Number of Employees

   Sixteen of the 44 respondents indicated they had some paid staff, typically ranging from one or two staff in smaller centres, to more than 10 employees, however in large urban centres.

6. Types of Activities

   A number of regular activities were offered. These have been clustered into five categories:

   (1) Food: themed dinners, potlucks, teas.

   (2) Social: cards, travel, pool, darts, bingo, drop in coffee.

   (3) Fitness: floor curling, carpet bowling, tai chi, line dancing, sit and be fit, fitness facility, pickle ball, bocce, golf, senior exercise class, shuffleboard.

   (4) Art, music, drama classes.

   (5) Financial: tax clinics, forms completion for senior benefits.

   Of the 44 responses, four centres, located in the larger cities, reported that they provide "community support or outreach services". Outreach services are defined as services that aim to improve accessibility of services to seniors. Services may include assistance in filling out paperwork and forms, assistance in acquiring services to maintain their home, or assistance in obtaining information to maintain or enhance their quality of life.

7. Other Comments from Seniors' Centres

   - Transportation is offered to community.
   - More space is needed.
   - Not many residents are interested in a seniors drop in centre.
   - Would like to offer outreach services that include community supports, like homemaking, yard work, snow removal etc.

8. Community Needs Assessment

   Of the 44 respondents, five conducted a community needs assessment between the years of 2012 and 2014.

9. Successes and Strengths

- Members are committed to keeping their centres going.
- Programs keep people active.

10. Challenges

- Some rural centres stated that people like to age in place and stay in their communities.
- Some centres stated it was difficult to attract younger seniors to join or to attract volunteers.
- Two centres stated there was a lack of government funding available.
- One centre stated they felt there was not a strong link between the centre and government.

# SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA


**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta**
c/o Alberta Seniors
600 Standard Life Centre
10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R7

**Telephone:** **780-422-2321**
**Fax:** **780-422-8762**

*To phone or fax toll-free outside of Edmonton, first dial 310-0000*

**Email:** **saca@gov.ab.ca**
**Website:** **www.seniors.alberta.ca**

Alberta
Government